

# **Priority Access Service (PAS)**

## **Priority Wireless Access for National Security/Emergency Preparedness Users**



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(OMNCS)**



# What is PAS?

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## Legal Background

- Priority Access Service (PAS) established in July 2000 by a Federal Communications Commission Report and Order (FCC Report & Order 00-242)
- The Report and Order establishes the regulatory, administrative, and operational framework for commercial mobile radio service (CMRS) providers to provide PAS to National Security and Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP) personnel with PAS priority assignments.
- A PAS assignment enables a NS/EP telecommunications user to obtain priority access to the next available wireless radio channel when necessary to initiate emergency calls.

# What are NS/EP Telecommunications Services?



**NS/EP** telecommunications services are those services used to maintain a state of readiness or to respond to and manage any event or crises, which causes or could cause injury or harm to the population, damage to or loss of property, or degrades or threatens the NS/EP posture of the United States.



# Who Qualifies for PAS?



- Key personnel and individuals in national security and emergency response leadership positions should request PAS; it is not intended for use by all emergency service personnel.



# **PAS Regulations (Users)**

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- **Users must determine the need for and request PAS assignments in a planned process, not waiting until an emergency has occurred.**
- **Users must initiate PAS requests through the appropriate authorizing agent.**
  - **State and local government users will apply for PAS through their designated State government authorizing agent**
  - **Federal users will apply for PAS through their department/agency**

# **PAS Regulations (Users)**

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- **Users can only invoke PAS when congestion disrupts wireless network access and the user must establish communications to fulfill an NS/EP mission.**
- **Users must participate in reconciliation or revalidation at the request of the authorizing agent or the NCS.**
- **Users must pay billed costs for PAS.**

# **PAS Regulations (Carriers)**

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- **Carrier participation is voluntary**
- **Carriers must adhere to uniform operating protocols.**
- **Carriers choosing to offer PAS must designate a point of contact to coordinate with the NCS**

# PAS Regulations (Carriers)

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- Upon receipt of an authorization from the NCS, carriers who offer PAS will provide the following Priority Levels:
  1. **Executive Leadership and Policy Makers**  
*(e.g. President, SecDef, Governors, Lieutenant Governors, Mayors, County Commissioners, and minimum senior staff for each of these offices)*



# PAS Regulations (Carriers)

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- Upon receipt of an authorization from the NCS, carriers who offer PAS will provide the following Priority Levels:
  1. Executive Leadership and Policy Makers
  2. Disaster Response/Military Command and Control  
*(e.g. Federal emergency operations center coordinators, State emergency services directors, State and local elected public safety officials, Federal personnel with intelligence and diplomatic responsibilities)*

# PAS Regulations (Carriers)

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- Upon receipt of an authorization from the NCS, carriers who offer PAS will provide the following Priority Levels:
  1. Executive Leadership and Policy Makers
  2. Disaster Response/Military Command and Control
  3. Public Health, Safety and Law Enforcement Command  
*(e.g. Federal law enforcement, State police, local fire and law enforcement, search and rescue team leaders)*

# PAS Regulations (Carriers)

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- Upon receipt of an authorization from the NCS, carriers who offer PAS will provide the following Priority Levels:
  1. Executive Leadership and Policy Makers
  2. Disaster Response/Military Command and Control
  3. Public Health, Safety and Law Enforcement Command
  4. Public Services/Utilities and Public Welfare  
*(e.g. Army Corps of Engineers leadership, power, water, sewage and telecommunications utilities, transportation leadership)*

# PAS Regulations (Carriers)

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- Upon receipt of an authorization from the NCS, carriers who offer PAS will provide the following Priority Levels:
  1. Executive Leadership and Policy Makers
  2. Disaster Response/Military Command and Control
  3. Public Health, Safety and Law Enforcement Command
  4. Public Services/Utilities and Public Welfare
  5. Disaster Recovery  
*(e.g. medical recovery operations, damage assessment, and disaster shelter coordination leadership)*

# Liability Under Federal and State Law

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## Federal

- The FCC ruled in the PAS Report and Order that providing priority access to authorized NS/EP users in accordance with PAS rules will be prima facie lawful under the Communications Act of 1934
- Providing priority access is not an “unreasonable discrimination or an unreasonable preference under Section 202 of the Communications Act”

## State

- Congress has enacted the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999, providing wireless carriers with the same protection from liability under Federal and State law as wireline carriers.

# Contact Information



## **NCS MAILING ADDRESS:**

Office of the Manager,  
National Communications System  
ATTN: Office of Priority  
Telecommunications (OPT)  
701 South Court House Road  
Arlington, VA 22204-2198

## **OPT TELEPHONE:**

(703) 607-4993 Primary  
(703) 607-4932 Secondary  
(703) 607-4900 Out of hours

## **OPT FACSIMILE (Unclassified):**

(703) 607-4937 Primary  
(703) 607-4998 Secondary

## **FCC MAILING ADDRESS:**

Public Safety and Wireless Division  
Wireless Telecommunications  
Bureau  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

## **FCC TELEPHONE:**

Business Hours (9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.)  
(202) 418-0680 Primary  
(202) 418-1316 Secondary